

Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 031008 TOSEC 030031

NODIS

FOR SECRETARY FROM SISCO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, EG, US, IS

SUBJECT: MILITARY SALES TO EGYPT

1. DINITZ CALLED ME SATURDAY AFTERNOON SAYING THAT HE HAD RECEIVED INFORMATION FROM CERTAIN STAFF AIDES ON THE HILL THAT NSC PERSONNEL WERE TESTING THE WATER ON PROSPECTIVE ARMS DEALS WITH EGYPT. HE SAID THAT STAFF AIDES HAD BEEN TOLD THAT THE SALE OF C-130'S WAS ONLY A BEGINNING, THAT THIS WAS PART OF A PROSPECTIVE GENERAL PACKAGE INCLUDING F-5'S AND TOW'S AND THAT THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE WOULD BE MEETING ON THE 16TH OF FEBRUARY AT WHICH TIME IT WOULD GET FULL INFORMATION REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATION'S PLANS. DINITZ SAID THAT GWERTZMAN PICKED UP ALL OF THE ABOVE ON THE HILL AND THAT THERE WOULD BE A STORY IN THE SUNDAY NEW YORK TIMES REVEALING ALL OF THIS, WHICH WOULD CAUSE MAJOR PROBLEMS FOR RABIN, PARTICULARLY SINCE THIS STORY WOULD BE COMING AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME RABIN WAS BRIEFING THE CABINET ON HIS U.S. TRIP. DINITZ SAID HE DID NOT KNOW PRECISELY WHAT GWERTZMAN WOULD SAY, BUT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT A DENIAL BE ISSUED ONCE THE

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GWERTZMAN ARTICLE WAS OUT.

2. I TOLD DINITZ I WAS COMPLETELY UNAWARE OF ANY NSC PERSONNEL BRIEFING THE CONGRESS, THAT THE ONLY STEP THAT

I WAS AWARE OF WAS THE INDICATED INTENTION ON THE PART OF THE U.S. REGARDING THE C-130'S WHICH YOU HAD PREVIOUSLY TOLD RABIN ABOUT. I SAID I KNEW OF NO OTHER DECISION NOR DID I KNOW OF ANYONE THAT HAD BEEN AUTHORIZED TO CONSULT THE HILL. I PROMISED DINITZ I WOULD LOOK INTO IT.

3. VARIOUS CHECKS HAVE DEVELOPED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION: STIMULATED BY RECENT BEECHER STORY ON C-130'S, CONGRESSIONAL AIDES (PRINCIPALLY IF NOT EXCLUSIVELY FROM SENATOR CASE'S STAFF) BEGAN PROBING LAST WEEK TO DETERMINE WHETHER MILITARY SALES COMMITMENTS HAD BEEN MADE TO EGYPTIANS ON ITEMS SUCH AS TOW'S AND F-5'S AS WELL AS C-130'S. UNBEKNOWNST TO US, WHITE HOUSE LEGISLATIVE LIAISON PEOPLE, IN EFFORT TO CALM CASE STAFF DOWN, TOLD THEM THAT NO DECISIONS WOULD BE MADE UNTIL THERE HAD BEEN CONSULTATIONS WITH CONGRESS AND THAT ONLY ITEM CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION 'AS C-130. IN THE COURSE OF DOING THIS, THEY APPARENTLY INDICATED THAT WE WERE CONSIDERING CONSULTATIONS ON THE OVERALL QUESTION OF A MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH EGYPT. AS YOU WILL RECALL, THE MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT WHICH YOU HAVE APPROVED PROPOSES DISCUSSING AN ARMS SUPPLY POLICY TOWARD EGYPT ON THE BASIS OF VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF TYPES OF EQUIPMENT, WHICH IN THE UPPER RANGES INCLUDE AMONG OTHER THINGS TOW'S AND F-5'S. SADAT HAS, OF COURSE, TOLD A NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF CONGRESS THAT HE IS INTERESTED IN THESE SPECIFIC WEAPONS.

4. THIS IS APPARENTLY THE ORIGIN OF GWERTZMAN'S STORY. AT MY REQUEST, ATHERTON TOOK A CALL LATE FRIDAY FROM GWERTZMAN IN AN EFFORT TO BACK HIM OFF THIS STORY OR AT LEAST TO PUT IT IN PERSPECTIVE. ATHERTON EMPHASIZED THAT CONSIDERATION WAS BEING GIVEN WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION TO THE QUESTION OF HOW AND WHEN TO CARRY OUT CONGRESSIONAL CONSULTATIONS ON ARMS FOR EGYPT, THAT NO CONCLUSIONS HAD BEEN REACHED, AND THAT NO DECISIONS TO SELL ANY MILITARY

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EQUIPMENT TO EGYPT WOULD BE MADE WITHOUT FULL CONGRESSIONAL CONSULTATION. ATHERTON ALSO MADE CLEAR THAT, AS WE SAID TO THE PRESS LAST WEEK, EGYPT HAD ASKED FOR C-130'S AND CAUTIONED GWERTZMAN AGAINST DRAWING ANY CONCLUSIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE STATUS OF OTHER ITEMS SUCH AS F-5'S AND TOW'S WHICH SADAT HAD INDICATED HE WAS INTERESTED IN.

5. ATHERTON AND I CALLED DINITZ BACK AND INFORMED HIM

THAT I HAD MADE SOME CHECKS AND THAT WE NOW KNOW BACKGROUND OF TALKS ON THE HILL WHICH HE HAD REFERRED TO. IT BEGAN WITH OEECHER STORY AND THERE WERE SOME PEOPLE ON THE HILL WHO DID NOT BELIEVE THAT NO MORE WAS INVOLVED THAN WE HAD SAID. THE NSC PERSON WHO TALKED TO THEM WAS TRYING TO CALM THEM DOWN; HE DID NOT TAKE THE INITIATIVE AND WAS NOT TESTING THE WATER. I THEN CONVEYED THE FOLLOWING POINTS TO DINITZ:

(A) FIRST, THAT THE MATTER IS AS I INDICATED PREVIOUSLY, I.E., THAT IT IS OUR INTENTION TO CONSULT WITH THE CONGRESS WITH RESPECT TO POSSIBLE SALE OF C-130'S AS SECRETARY KISSINGER INFORMED PRIME MINISTER RABIN.

(B) SECONDLY, THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NO DECISIONS TAKEN WITH RESPECT TO ANY OTHER HARDWARE.

(C) THIRD, THAT WE ARE CONSIDERING THE QUESTION OF CONSULTATIONS AT SOME POINT WITH THE CONGRESS ON THE OVERALL PROBLEM OF ARMS ASSISTANCE TO EGYPT. BUT THAT NO DECISION HAS BEEN TAKEN AS TO EITHER THE TIMING OR THE SUBSTANCE OF SUCH CONSULTATIONS.

(D) FINALLY, AS TO ANY PUBLIC STATEMENT, WE WILL HAVE A LOOK AT THE GWERTZMAN ARTICLE WITH A VIEW TO DETERMINING WHETHER AND WHAT MIGHT BE APPROPRIATELY SAID.

6. DINITZ REPLIED HE WAS SURE THERE WAS NO DECISION ON ADDITIONAL HARDWARE. BUT SECRETARY HAD TOLD RABIN THERE WERE NO NEGOTIATIONS AND NO PLANS TO SUPPLY ADDITIONAL HARDWARE BEYOND C-130'S. THIS DID NOT MEAN FOREVER BUT NOT THIS YEAR. I SAID I HAD NOT BEEN PRESENT AND WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO SAY YES OR NO TO THAT. DINITZ RESPONDED THAT
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THERE WAS NO DOUBT PEOPLE FROM THE ADMINISTRATION HAD TALKED ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF TOW'S AND F-5'S. I SAID I KNEW OF NO DECISIONS AND THAT NO ONE HAD BEEN AUTHORIZED TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO TEST THE WATER; THEY HAD BEEN RESPONDING TO QUERIES FROM A STAFF AIDE ON THE HILL. ATHERTON ADDED THAT IT HAD BEEN CONGRESSIONAL AIDES WHO HAD RAISED TOW'S AND F-5'S.

7. DINITZ SAID HIS GREATEST CONCERN WAS THAT CONGRESSIONAL PEOPLE HAD IMPRESSION FROM ADMINISTRATION REPRESENTATIVE THAT ISRAEL HAD ACQUIESCED IN SALE OF C-130'S. HE ASKED THAT WE MAKE CLEAR THERE HAD BEEN NO ISRAELI ACQUIESCENCE, OR ISRAEL WOULD BE FORCED TO DENY THIS PUBLICLY. I SAID WE WOULD MAKE SURE OUR PEOPLE UNDERSTOOD THIS.

8. DINITZ CONCLUDED THAT HE HOPED THAT, WHEN OUR PRES-
ENTATION TO CONGRESS TAKES PLACE, IT WILL NOT COVER OTHER
TYPES OF EQUIPMENT THAN C-130'S. I SAID I KNEW OF NO
DECISIONS SO FAR WITH RESPECT TO CONSULTATIONS. SISCO

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